

~~SECRET~~

4

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

2 March 1951

SUBJECT: NIE-29: PROBABILITY OF AN INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA
IN 1951

THE PROBLEM

To assess the capabilities and intentions of the USSR and its European Satellites with respect to action against Yugoslavia during 1951.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The ultimate Soviet objectives in Yugoslavia are to eliminate the Tito Government, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure. The USSR has not, however, given any clear indication that it intends to try to eliminate the Tito regime regardless of the cost or within any specific period of time.

2. It is unlikely that during 1951 the Tito regime could be overthrown by a Soviet-inspired coup or by internal revolt.

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

Therefore, the USSR would have to resort to Satellite or Soviet-Satellite invasion if it intended to overthrow Tito in 1951.

3. The continuing military build-up in the neighboring Satellite states (increase in armed forces, stockpiling, re-equipment, gasoline conservation, stepping-up of war industry, etc.) has reversed the previous balance of military strength between the Satellites and Yugoslavia and has given the Satellites the capability of launching a successful invasion of Yugoslavia with little or no warning.

4. Yugoslavia could not defend itself against a sustained attack by the four neighboring Satellite powers (Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Albania) if this attack were conducted under unified command and with full logistical support from the USSR. The Yugoslavs would resist, however, and could conduct guerrilla-type operations for some time after the collapse of formal military resistance.

5. Joint Soviet-Satellite forces could successfully invade Yugoslavia, overcome formal military resistance, and eventually render guerrilla operations ineffective.

6. Yugoslav capabilities and morale are such that substantial Western assistance in military materiel would

SECRET

probably enable Yugoslavia to defend itself successfully against a Satellite attack. Such assistance could even extend the period of resistance to a full-scale Soviet-Satellite attack. Any Western materiel sent would have to be adapted to the special requirements of Yugoslav forces. Moreover, to be effective to Yugoslavia in the initial stages of an invasion, it would have to be delivered well in advance of hostilities and would have to flow on a continuing basis.

7. If the USSR decides to launch an attack on Yugoslavia in 1951, we believe that the attack probably will be made by Satellite forces with "unofficial" Soviet assistance as required.

8. Continuing large-scale Satellite military preparations indicate that the groundwork is being laid for a possible invasion of Yugoslavia. These indications are not conclusive evidence of an attack on Yugoslavia since there has been a military build-up in the other Satellite states in addition to the ones adjacent to Yugoslavia and since, in the case of Bulgaria and Albania, the military preparations could point to an attack on Greece or Turkey as well as Yugoslavia. Moreover, there is no conclusive evidence that military preparations pointing toward a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia are

- 3 -

SECRET

SECRET

timed for an attack in 1951. Cominform propaganda since July 1950 has consistently advanced arguments that could be used to justify a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia, but there has been no recent trend in such propaganda suggesting an attack at an early date.

9. The Kremlin may estimate that a Satellite invasion of Yugoslavia could be carried through successfully without precipitating general war and may consider the risk of general war to be less in 1951 than later. While the USSR would probably not decide to launch a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 unless it is willing to accept a substantial risk of precipitating general war, we believe such an attack in 1951 must be considered a real possibility.

- 4 -

SECRET